

6. FUTURE OF SEATTLE'S PARK SYSTEM

This plan is only a starting point for establishing an effective Parks and Recreation historic resource management program. The team working on this document collected the most relevant, readily available information and placed it in a comprehensive and, hopefully, useful format. But this is by no means the last word on the history of Seattle's parks or the management of existing historic resources. Most of the recommendations are broad and conceptual in nature, without the supporting details to make immediate implementation possible.

Thus, this plan represents an initial step in a longer journey towards achieving an effective historic resource management program. But, by describing the historic context, tabulating the most relevant information, establishing a conceptual framework, and recommending strategies to pursue, the plan does lay the foundation for future work. Immediate next steps necessary to initiate the longer process are as follows:

- **Adopt this plan as a supplement to the Parks and Recreation Plan 2000.** Adoption of this plan by the Parks Board would make the recommendations official policy and guide subsequent actions. Further, it would clearly signal to staff, other departments and the public Parks and Recreation's commitment to effective historic resource management.



Residents enjoy a stroll along Green Lake.



Young and old frolic in the cool waters of the wading pool at Northacres Park.

- **In the near future, augment the history and resource description sections of this plan to include the “Forward Thrust” and “Pro Parks” eras.** The period after 1964 was not included in this document because the Team wished to establish a conceptual framework and approach to the older resources before tackling these more recent eras. However, the more recent time period should be added when staff resources are available or when the preliminary inventory is undertaken.
- **Transmit this document to other City departments to work collaboratively on projects affecting Parks and Recreation historic resources.** This is the first step in implementing recommended strategy #1. Ultimately, the departments should identify activities that affect Parks and Recreation’s historic resources and explore opportunities for ongoing coordination.
- **Seek funding for the preliminary inventory.** This inventory, the focus of recommended strategy #2, is a necessary preparatory step for other recommended historic resource management actions. The recommendation is for a “reconnaissance” inventory to screen for potential landmarks and establish a classification system and database of resource categories, so the inventory should not require extensive new research or exhaustive field work.



Freeway Park, completed in 1976, was the first over-freeway park in the nation.



At ninety-one years old, the Volunteer Park Conservatory remains vibrant and inspiring.

Of course, historic resource management is only one of the many considerations Parks and Recreation must address. The key will be to integrate the recommendations from this plan into the broader spectrum of development and maintenance activities. This will not always prove easy, and will undoubtedly require creative thinking and effective planning.

Surely, though, the rewards will be significant. A principal finding of this historic resources planning effort is that Seattle is truly blessed with a legacy of parks, open spaces and boulevards that work together to enhance our neighborhoods and unify the City's urban fabric. Not only will effective conservation of this legacy protect the individual resources, it will lead Parks and Recreation to build on the best of what we already have and to enhance the system as a whole. This, in turn, will help Seattle to grow graciously rather than haphazardly, and to evolve into a healthier, more vital city.



Enjoying the beach at low tide at Carkeek Park.

